

Pentecost Sunday
June 4, 2017

Lectionary:63
Acts 2:1-11
1 Cor 12:3b-7,12-13

Within our church we have diversity. Diversity in race and ethnicity, diversity in backgrounds and life experiences, diversity in careers and in the way we spend our days. Yet we gather together each week to experience a common message, a common good...the Word of God.

It is truly remarkable to think that what is happening here at Saint Josephs each week is also happening across the state, across the country and across the world. In the farthest corners of the earth, people who speak different languages, who live in different cultures, who have vastly different life experiences, gather each week to hear the same message. The Word of God.

It seems that this is what the devout Jews in the first reading were experiencing. They were gathered "all in one place together" and "filled the entire house" but who were these people? They came from different nations and spoke different languages. Yet as they gathered in one place, they were amazed (and confused) that each one heard the words in their own native language. This reading seems to convey that the Word of God is universal and speaks to universal truths. It is something we can all understand.

The ability to "hear" this truth can come to each of us at different times and in different ways. Coming from only mildly religious backgrounds, our family's journey began when we attended Pre Cana. Initially, we saw this as a formality; something required to be married in the Catholic Church. We were then amazed at the spiritual richness this daylong event provided. It left us wanting more. Looking back, we believe this was the first time either of us truly began to hear the Word of God. Not having a church of our own, we married in a church in the Chicago area where we encountered a priest that helped us set our path. He made it very clear to us that we were welcome but that he expected us to be living the Word of God going forward.

Some years after we were married we moved to Chatham and found Saint Joseph's Church. As we started to attend mass regularly, we began to hear and integrate the Word of God into our lives. At that point, Don decided to participate in the RCIA program, and to fully commit to the Catholic Church. The impact that this program had on him and on our entire family cannot be overstated. The experience was life changing.

As a family and as a parish we gather each week to hear the Word of God. However, what we do with it, how we practice it, how we integrate it into our lives for the betterment of the world in which we live takes on many different forms. As the second reading explains, "to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." The challenge then, for each of us, is to determine what form of service can God work through us?

Don and Melissa Bollman